THE BIG BOOK OF BOARD GAMES

14 classic games to color & play

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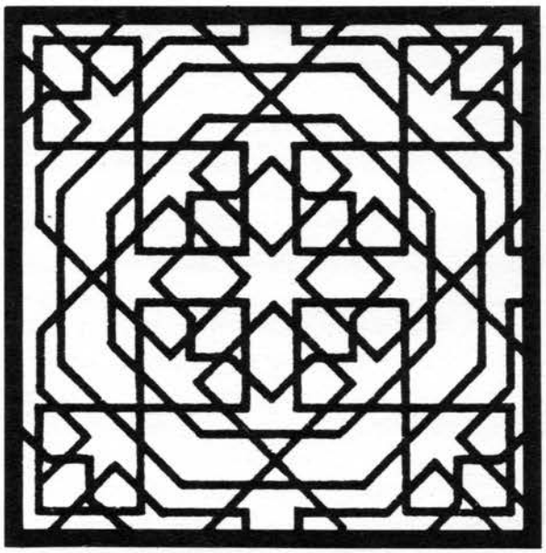

Illustrated by Fifi Weinert & Tom Beaudrot
Written by Laura Palmer

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INTRODUCTION

Board games have been popular since earliest recorded history. Three examples of the Egyptian game Senet were discovered in the tomb of young King Tut. That makes those game boards more than 3,000 years old! For our version of King Tut's game see the center spread.

We've collected fourteen terrific games here in *The Big Book of Board Games*. The games you'll find here span centuries and continents. Some are games of chance, some of skill and most require a little of both. A few of these games may already be old favories of yours. A few, we're sure, will be brand-new favorites.

You must supply the playing pieces and/or dice needed for each of these games. You'll find our suggestions for improvising playing pieces on the following page. With a little ingenuity it shouldn't be hard to get started. You can play the games in *The Big Book of Board Games* any time, anywhere. After all, the book is portable, and the necessary equipment can be acquired the world over.

We hope you'll be engaged, entertained and excited by playing these games.

Good luck!

Fifi Weinert
Laura Palmer

Special thanks to Dr. Timothy Kendall for his designs of the Senet and Ur game boards.

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PLAYING PIECES AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

As mentioned in the Introduction, you will need to supply a few extra items to play these games. For some you will need dice, and nearly all require playing pieces or markers. Opponents should be able to tell their markers apart by color or shape. Size, however, should be fairly standard. Markers should be easy to pick up and move around the board.

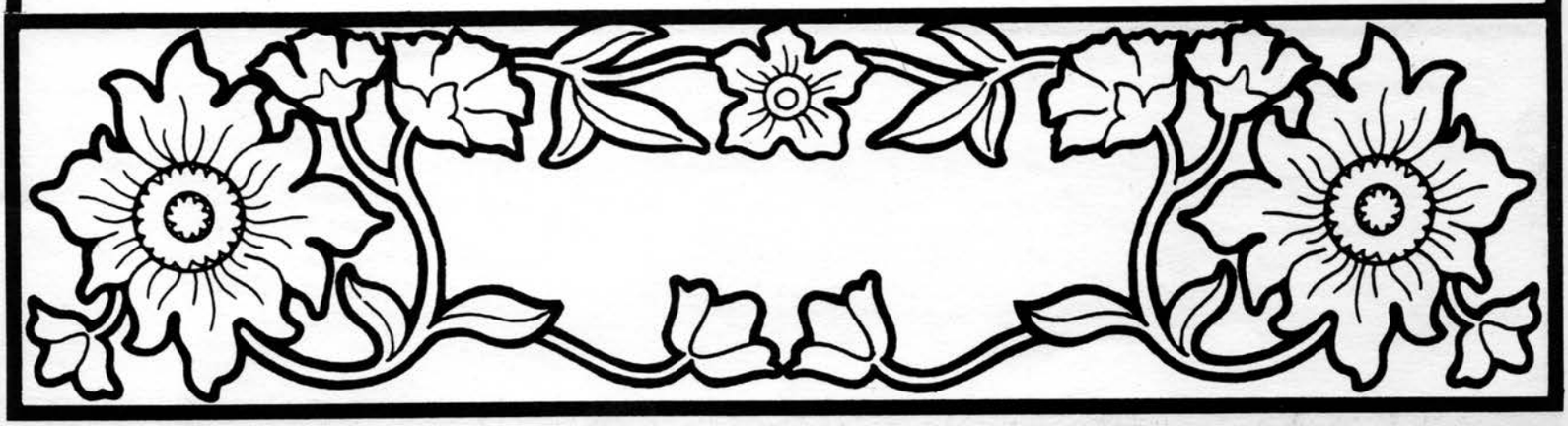
One of the simplest suggestions is to borrow the playing pieces from any commercial board game you may have around. Another easy solution is to use different coins, buttons, bottle caps, golf tees or other small items you might find in your home. If you really want to personalize one of the games, you may want to make your own playing pieces. Modeling clay or cut dowels are suitable for this and can be attractively painted and decorated.

WAYS TO START A GAME

Whether a game requires skill or chance, someone has to go first. In most games, it makes no difference who goes first, but in some games it is an advantage. Therefore, it's important that you find an impartial way to choose who begins a game. Rolling dice is an easy method, with the highest roll of the dice determining the winner. In a game for two, tossing a coin is a quick solution. There are also many counting-out rhymes you could use: "Eeny, Meeny" or "One Potato, Two Potato," for instance. You could also draw straws, or play "Shoot" with fingers. "Shoot" is for two players. Odds or evens are called and at the count of "One, Two, Three, Shoot!" each person holds up *any number* of fingers on one hand. The *total* number of fingers held up by both players makes either the "odd" or the "even" caller the winner.

Once a starter has been chosen, if you are playing with more than two, it is customary for play to continue clockwise around the board from the starter. Two players obviously just alternate.

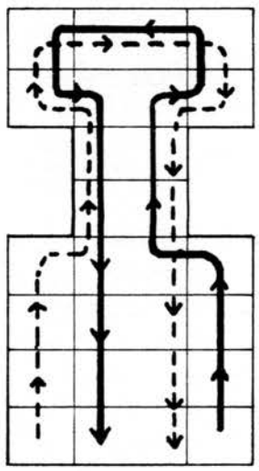
You may know several other ways to start a game than those we've mentioned. It can be a lot of fun just inventing and playing games to start a game.



THE ROYAL GAME OF UR

The ancient Sumerian city of Ur, mentioned in the Bible as the home of Abraham, existed more than a thousand years before the time of King Tut. British explorer and archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley unearthed four examples of this game board when investigating ancient royal graves at Ur in 1926-27. The game he found is perhaps the oldest known ancestor of Backgammon.

PIECES: Seven pieces of a single color for each of two players, one die.
TO PLAY: Ur is a race game; the object is to be the first to get all of your pieces around your own course and off the board. One player uses the left path and one the right, as diagrammed below.



Numbers on the die have a special meaning:

A throw of 1 = one point (move one piece one space)
A throw of 2 = zero points (no move, no rethrow)
A throw of 3 = rethrow, no value
A throw of 4 = four points (move one piece four spaces)
A throw of 5 = five points (move one piece five spaces)
A throw of 6 = rethrow, no value

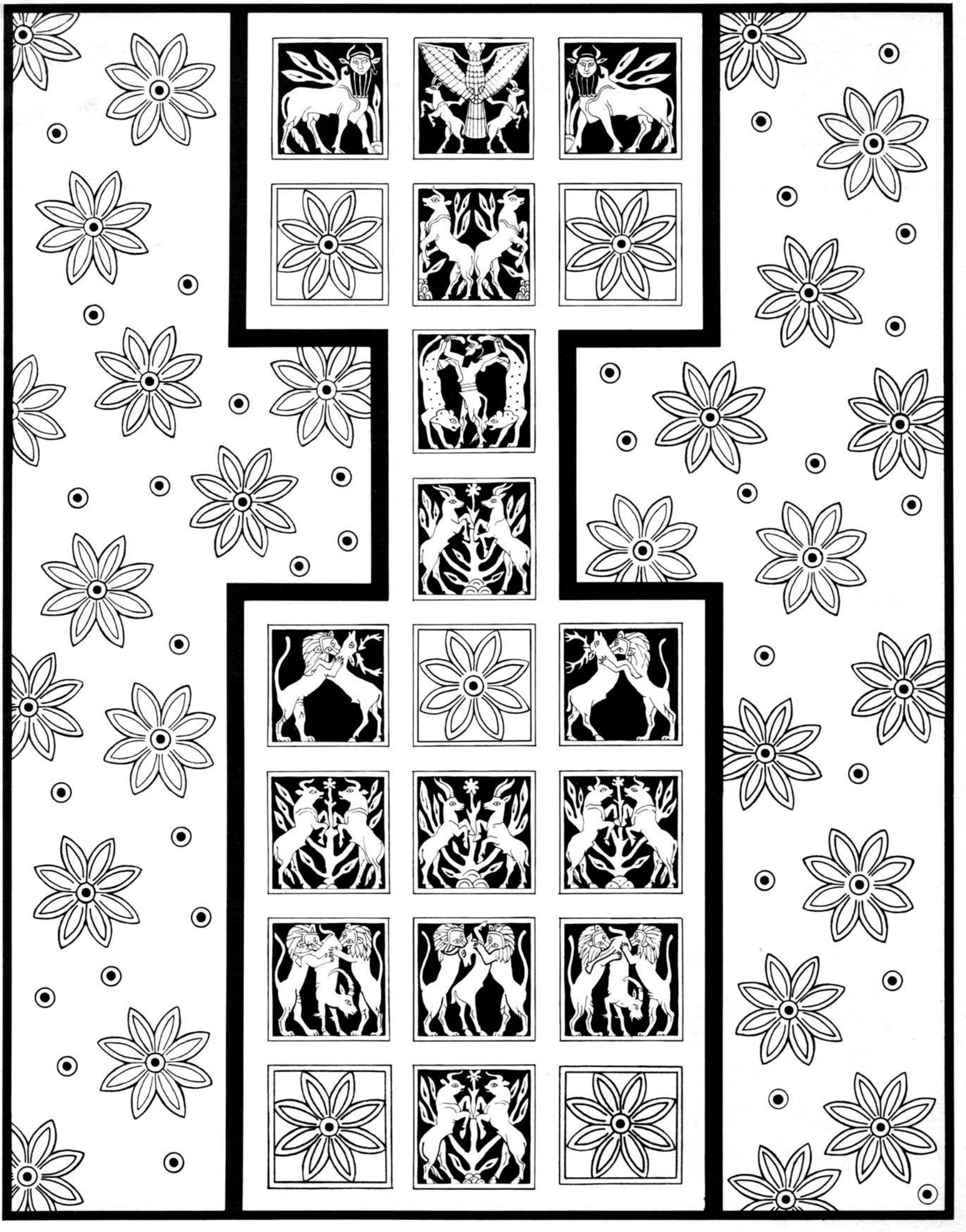
This unusual scoring system is a result of adapting the original game to include the use of a die. Mesopotamians used four painted, pyramid-shaped dice.

To begin, a counter may be moved onto the board only on a throw of 1 or 5. The counter moves accordingly to the first or fifth space on its own path. Those squares are each marked with a rosette, as are two more squares further on.

On any subsequent throw of 1 or 5, another piece may be placed on the board. With any other count, a piece in play is moved along the diagrammed track accordingly. Should a piece in play land on a rosette-marked square while circuiting the board, that player may decline throwing the die on his next turn and automatically enter a new piece on the first square.

To be certain of the direction in which pieces in the two center spaces are traveling, it is helpful to have one side of your pieces marked with an X or any other identifying mark.

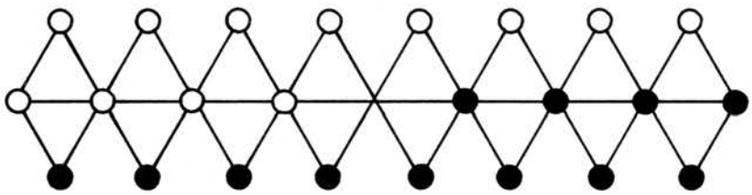
Any number of pieces can occupy a single space. But once you have reached the center track, your pieces are liable to attack by your opponent. If your opponent lands on a square occupied by one or more of your pieces, those pieces must be removed from the board to begin the game again. The only safe squares on the center track are those marked by rosettes and the final square. On these squares, pieces are invulnerable. However, rising pieces may only attack other rising pieces, and pieces that have been turned over may only be attacked by same. To get off the board, a piece must first land by exact count on the exit square. Once a piece has arrived on the exit square, an exact throw of 4 takes it off the board. If there are more than one on the exit square, all pieces on the square are removed on a single throw of 4.



AWITHLAKNANNAI

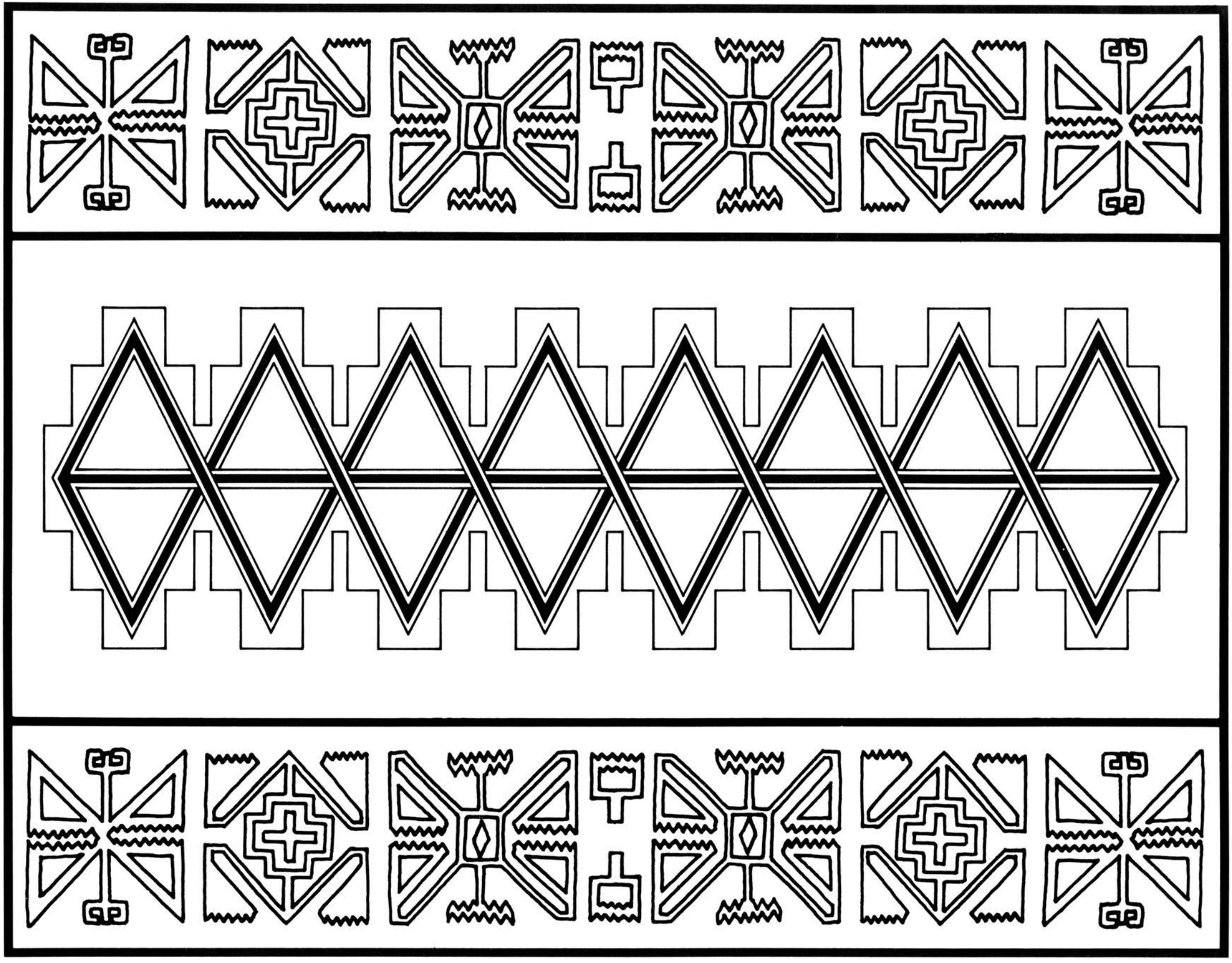
This tongue-twisting title is the name of a fascinating battle game played by the Zuni Indians of New Mexico and the American Southwest generally. The name means "stone warriors" in Zuni and their playing board was called the "stone plain." Awithlaknannai diagrams have been found carved on the roofs of some Indian cliff dwellings in Colorado. We think Indians played the game with pottery pieces made from broken pots and bowls. Examples of these rounded clay discs have been discovered in Indian mounds from Canada to South America, which suggests that the game was enjoyed by Indians of many cultures.

PIECES: Each of two players has 12 pieces of a single color.
TO PLAY: Start the game by arranging the pieces on the board as follows:



Player No. 1 = ● Player No. 2 = ○

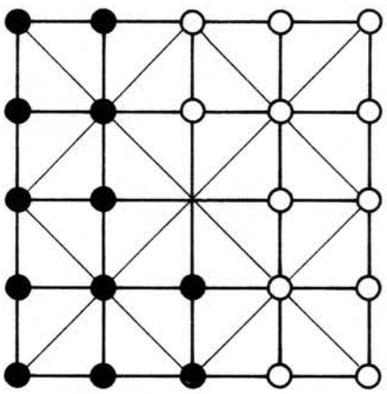
By turns, players move each of their pieces to adjacent points. Just as in checkers, if the adjacent point is occupied by an opponent's piece, you may jump over that piece provided the next point is empty. In a jump, the opponent's piece is seized. The object of the game is to be the first person to capture all of your opponent's pieces.



ALQUERQUE

Alquerque, an ancient relative of checkers, still enjoys popularity in Spain where it was played by the Moors centuries ago. Alquerque is related to certain other battle games, among them Nine Men's Morris, Asalto and Awithlaknannai. It is possible that roofing beams found at Kurna on the Nile River at Thebes in Egypt contain diagrams of Alquerque game boards. The temple that contained these diagrams was constructed in the 13th century B.C. So you can see that this game is *very* old.

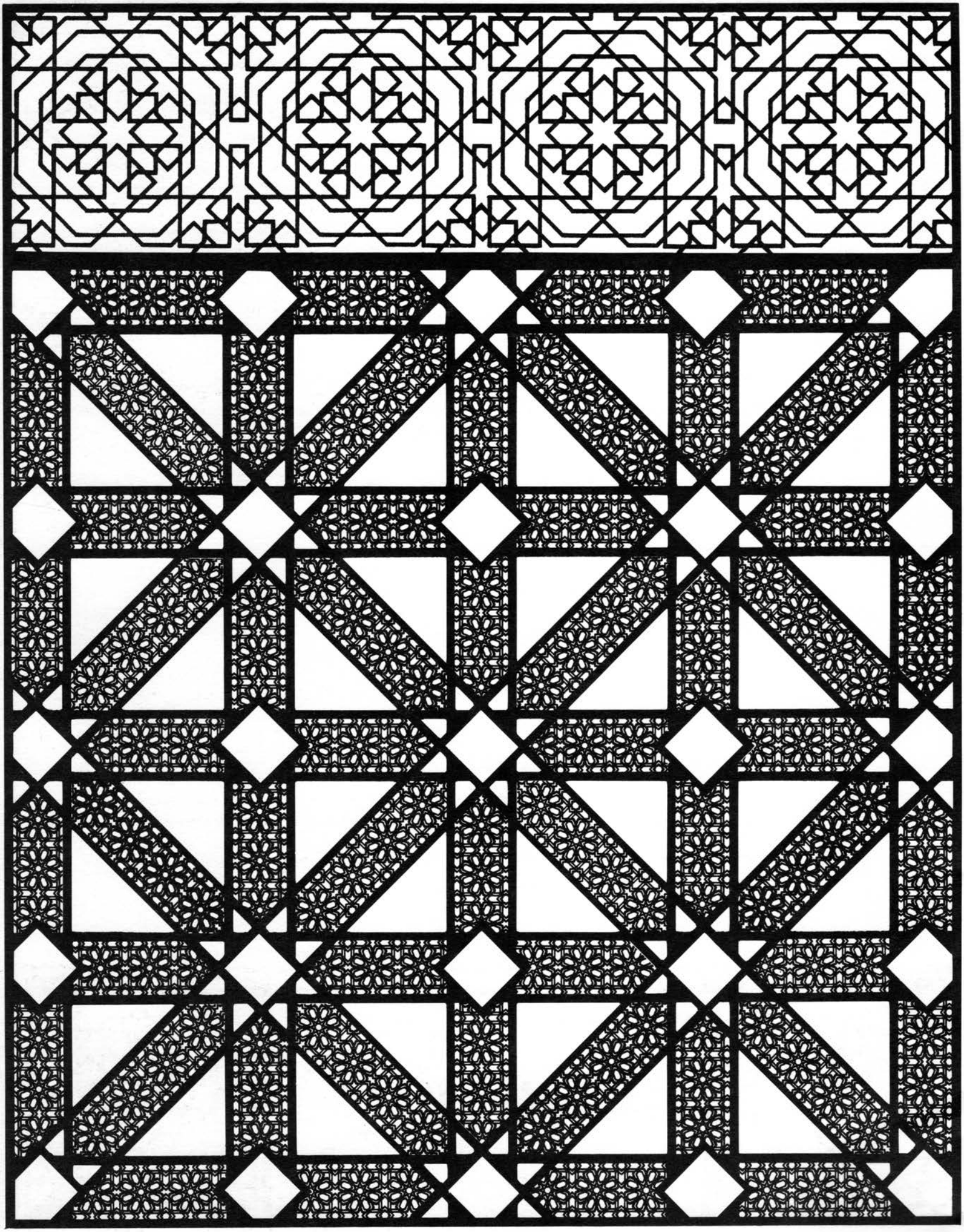
PIECES: Each of two players has 12 playing pieces of a single color. (Checkers are ideal, or try coins).
TO PLAY: To begin, pieces are arranged on the 24 intersections, leaving the center uncovered, as diagrammed below. Players decide who goes first and then alternate turns.



Player No. 1 = ● Player No. 2 = ○

There are two possible types of moves to be made. A piece can be moved along any grid line to the next intersection if that space is empty. Or a piece may jump an opponent's piece if the next space behind that piece is vacant. Jumps must be made in a straight line over an opponent's piece, vertically, horizontally or diagonally. If an opponent's piece is jumped, that piece is considered captured and removed from the board. Multiple jumps are also allowed and may follow a zig-zag path as long as each leg of the journey is a straight line jump.

One additional point: Capture is compulsory; if a chance to jump and capture is missed, the opponent may remove that player's piece.



THE GAME OF GOOSE

How Goose game got its name is unclear. The very earliest examples of the board, several centuries old, often show goose designs on certain of the board's squares. Perhaps, since the game is a travel and adventure race, there is some connection with "wild goose chases."

Goose was one of the first games brought to America with the colonists. A handsome version of the board which dates from the Colonial period is on display at Colonial Williamsburg. The squares on the board displayed here are based on traditional American quilting patterns. The home square shows a pattern called "goose feet."

PIECES: One die, one marker of a different color for each player.

TO PLAY: Goose is a game for two to four players. The die is thrown by turn and players advance the corresponding number of squares, starting at one.

If a marker lands on a square on which a rising sun is shown (12 or 25), the player gets an extra turn.

Landing on a Kansas Trouble Windmill (18, 29 or 43) means you must return to the square from which that turn was started.

Landing on a goose facing left means you exchange places with the nearest player behind you. If no player is behind you, change places with the nearest marker in front of you.

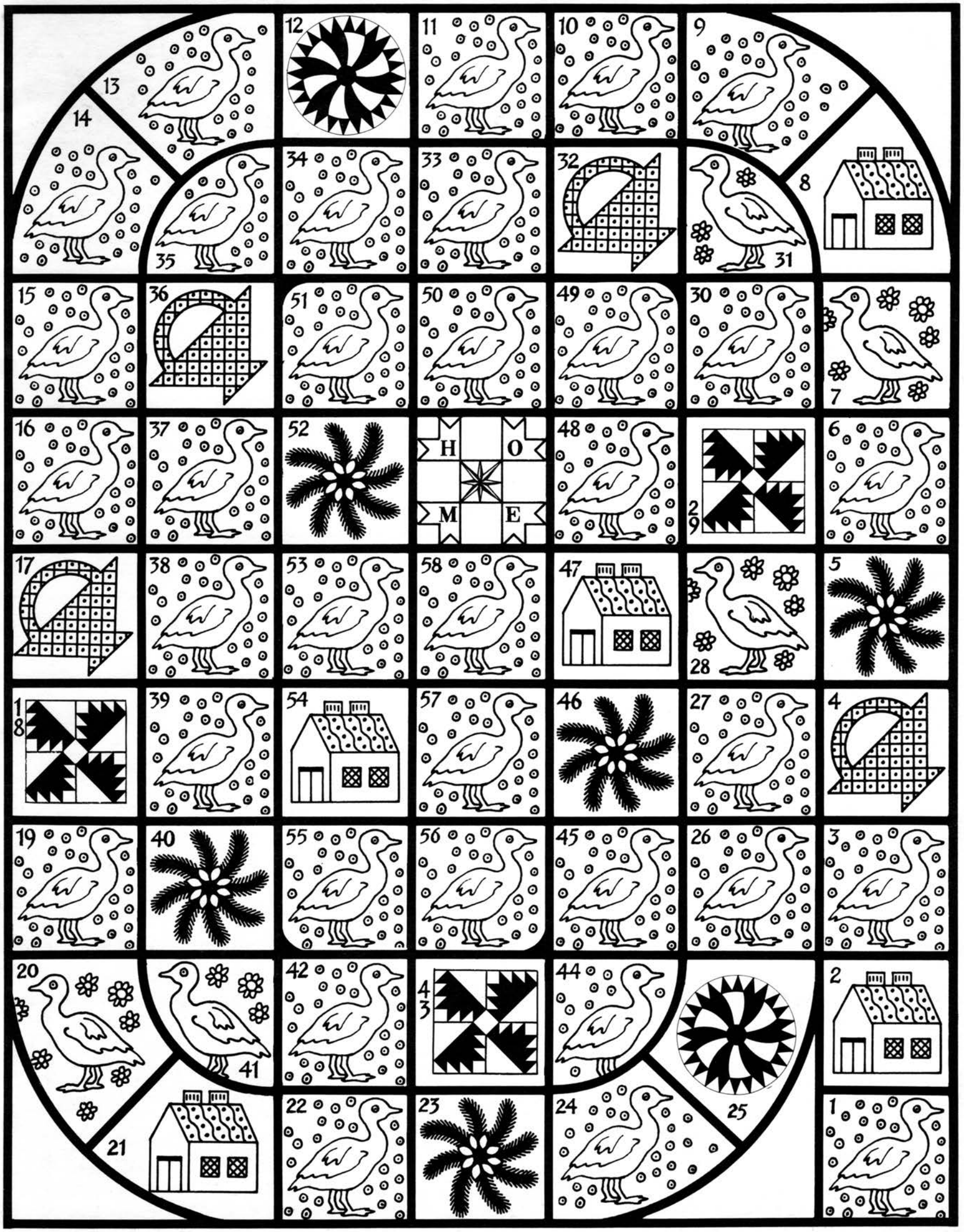
Landing on a goose facing right means stay where you just landed and pass the die to the next player.

A house is "jail." The player who lands there must skip a turn, unless another marker lands there in the meantime, in which case the first player is free.

The feathered flower means two extra turns for the player who lands there.

The square marked with a basket design means putting your piece back to start if you land there.

To win, a player must be the first to land on "Goose Feet" with an exact roll of the die. When a player is close to "goose feet" and throws a number larger than he needs, he must move backward one square for every point on the die which is more than he needs to finish.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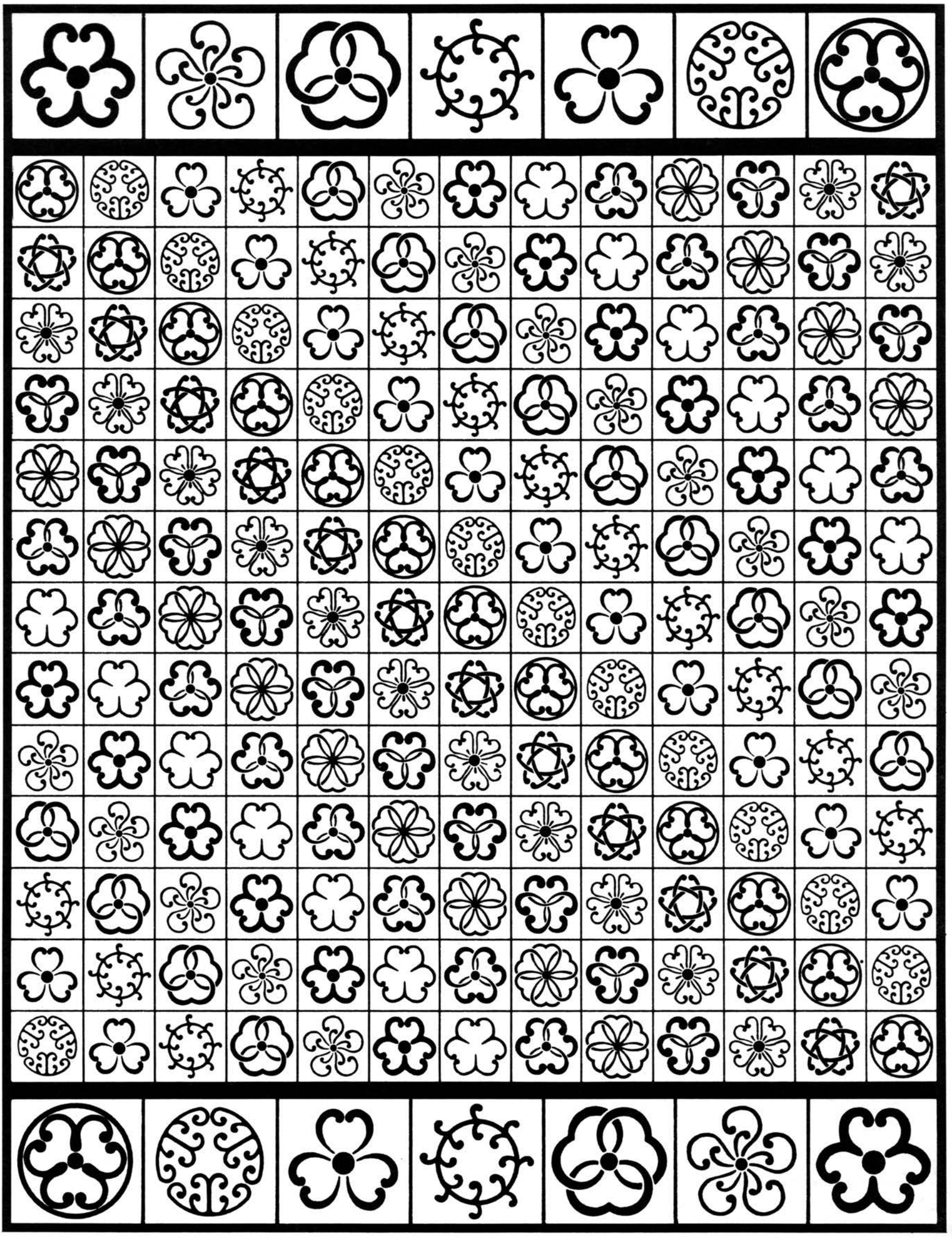
GO-BANG

Go-Bang, which originated in Japan, is an expanded version of Tic-Tac-Toe. The game is played on the same board used for the challenging Japanese strategy game, Go. The confusion of massive attack and defense is all part of the fun.

PIECES: Each of two players has at least 75 pieces of a single color (shirt buttons, golf tees, etc.).
TO PLAY: The object of the game is to be the first to get five pieces of your own color in a row. The row may be vertical, horizontal or diagonal. Pieces are placed on the board one at a time by turn. Be careful not to overlook your opponent's progress while your attention is directed to building your own columns. A column is blocked in a given direction when one player's marker is placed next to the opponent's marker, just as in Tic-Tac-Toe. Once a partially built row is blocked, you must find new ways to go.

The game ends in a draw if all the pieces have been laid down and no complete columns made. But the chances of sneaking in a Go-Bang (five in a row, that is) are good if you have several rows building at once. Once somebody gets a Go-Bang, the game is won.



PACHISI

Pachisi is the national game of India. In ancient Sanskrit literature it is known as the game of "luck and unluck." Sanskrit legend says that Pachisi was played by the major deities, Kala and Kali, "with human beings for playing pieces on the board of the world." In years gone by, Pachisi enthusiasts in India carried cloth versions of the board rolled up in their turbans so as to be ready to play on the instant.

PIECES: Two dice, four markers per player. Each player's markers are in a single color.

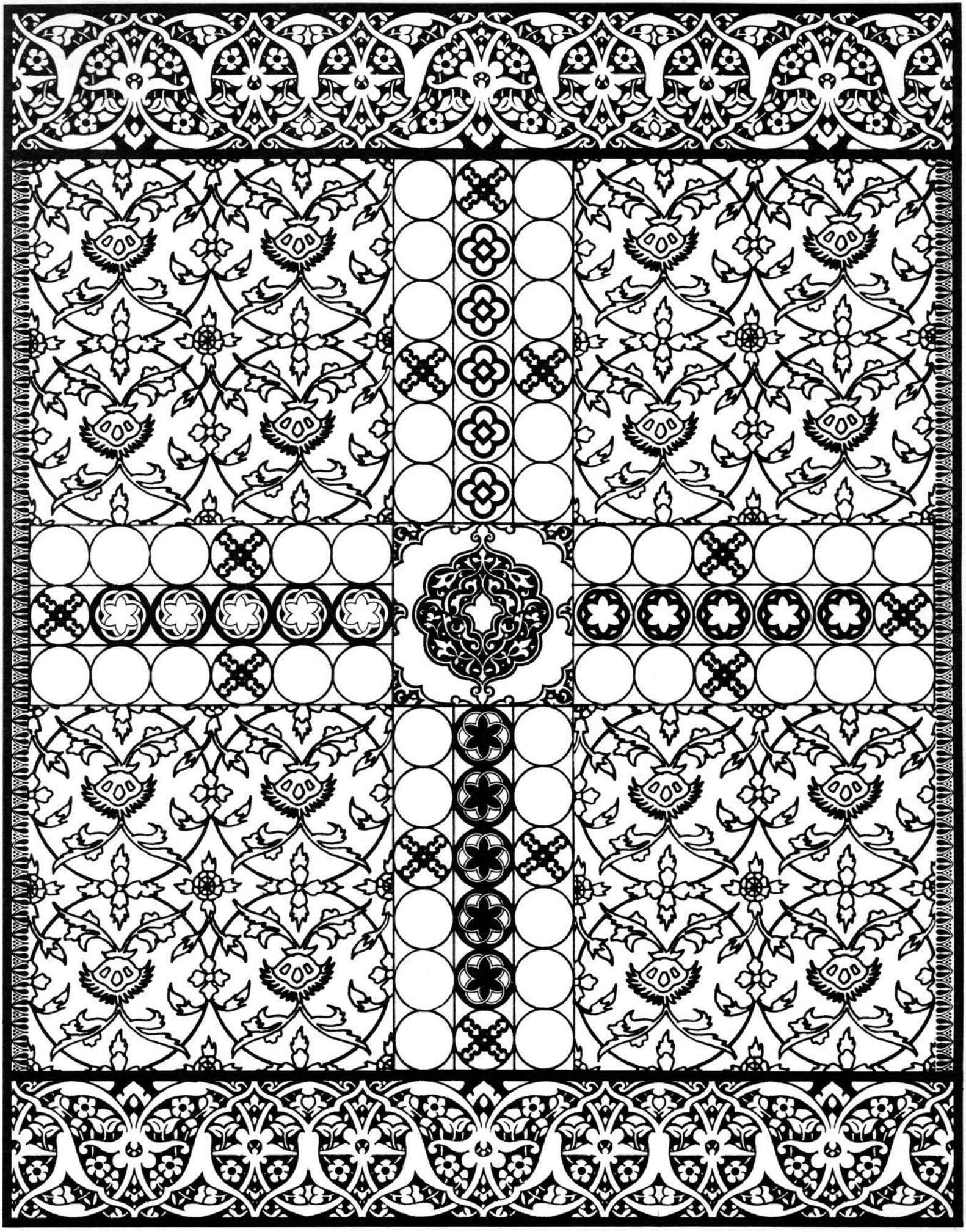
TO PLAY: The game is for two to four players. Each player takes one arm of the cross-shaped board as home. If four are playing, the pairs sitting accross from each other are teammates. Players start with all four of their markers in one of the larger corner squares. Pieces are entered one at a time on the X-marked circle to the left of and nearest to their starting corner. Pieces then proceed counterclockwise around the board on the outside track of the arms. To reach the finish, a marker must travel the complete circuit of the outside track of the board and come back up to the center path of its own home arm—the arm from which it started. A piece may enter the "finish" square in the center of the board with an exact count on either die or both combined.

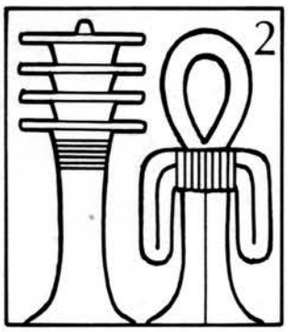
Much like Backgammon, dice rolls may be acted on in several ways. With a roll of 5-2, for example, one piece may be moved seven spaces or two pieces may be moved separately: one two spaces and one five. With a roll of double 2's a player gets to move one piece ten spaces and take an extra turn. Double 6's entitle a player to move one piece 25 spaces and take an extra turn. On all other double throws a score of four times the total shown may be divided among a player's pieces. With a throw of double 4's, for example, one piece could be move 16 spaces, two pieces could each move eight spaces, three pieces could divide the throw 8, 4, 4, or four pieces could move four spaces each.

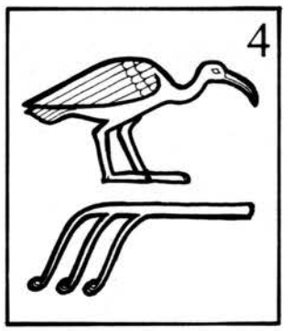
During its travels around the board each marker is open to attack on all but the "safe" squares—those marked with an X. A player captures his opponent's piece by landing on the same square. The captured piece must go back to the X-marked start. The capturer gets an extra turn. If you are playing as teams, you would not send your teammate back to the start but would join him on his square, thus forming a blockade.

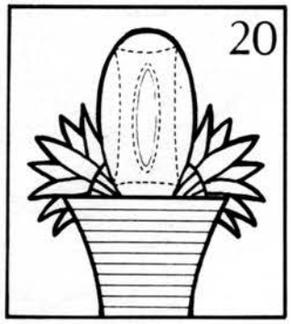
A player or team creates a blockade by landing two or more markers on the same square. An opponent cannot pass through or capture a blockade unless he has an equal or greater number of pieces who can be landed on the blockade square in a single move. Then he would capture all the markers in the blockade. A blockade on a safe square cannot be captured. Once two or more pieces of a single color are doubled up in a blockade, they can travel together for safety. A two-color blockade cannot move together. Double throws are particularly helpful here.

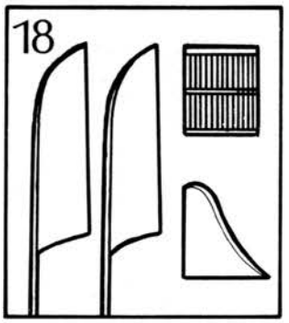
There is an art to playing in teams. For instance, a player who has formed a blockade with one of his partner's markers may want to decline his turn if he sees an opponent coming up behind. Also, it might be helpful to keep one of your markers on the board for a second circuit if your teammate still has a single marker outstanding. This kind of strategy comes with practice.

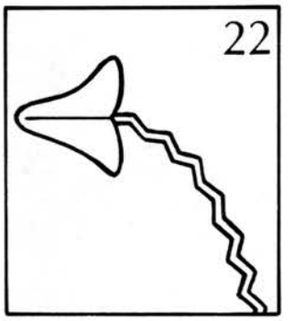












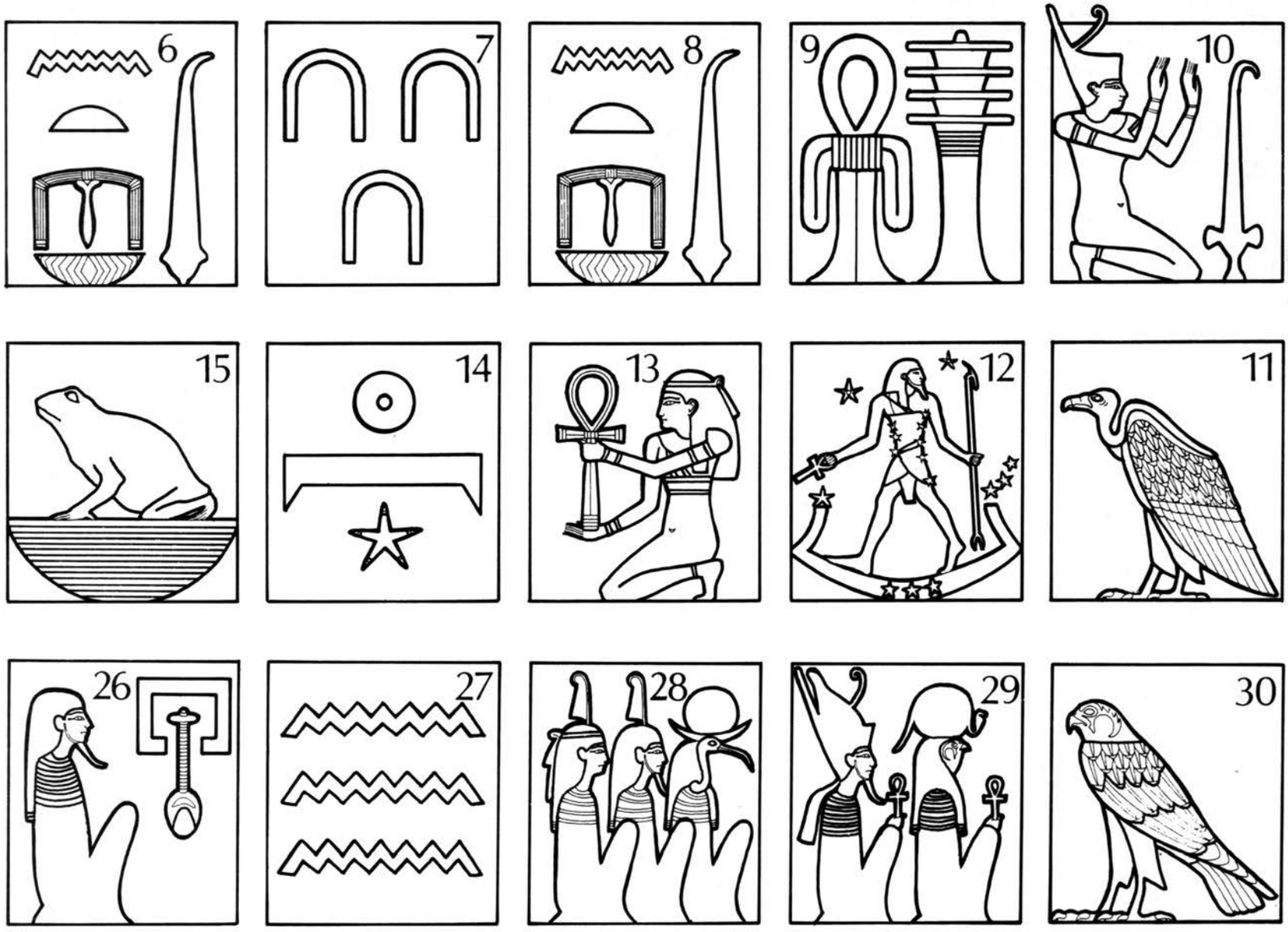
SENET

Famous now as the game found in King Tut's tomb, Senet is a game you will enjoy as much as the Egyptians did 3,000 years ago. We don't know exactly how the game was played, but these rules are derived from a papyrus drawing of a Senet board on display in a museum in Turin, Italy. The board represents a journey through the Egyptian underworld (where they believed spirits to travel after death) with the end goal being a happy afterlife. The name Senet literally means "passing."

PIECES: Each of two players has five pieces of a single color. Four, special two-sided dice are needed. These can be made from half-dowels or popsicle sticks painted black on one side.

TO PLAY: All four dice are thrown at once. Scoring is as follows:

One white side up	1
Two white sides up	2
Three white sides up	3
Four white sides up	4
Four black sides up	6



To start, all pieces are placed alternately on the first ten squares. The first player to throw a score of 1 goes first. This player takes as his pieces whatever color piece sits on the 10th square. With that first throw of 1, the first player moves his pieces from square 10 to square 11. He then rethrows, moving any of his pieces the number indicated. A throw of 1, 4 or 6 earns the player another throw. On a throw of 2 or 3, he moves a piece the number indicated and his turn is over. After the first player's turn has ended, the second player automatically plays the other color and his first move must be from square 9.

A piece is attacked when an opponent's piece lands on the same square. Their positions are exchanged, with the attacked piece returning to the square from which the attacker began his turn. Two pieces of the same color defend each other from attack if they occupy consecutive squares. Three pieces of the same color in a row form a blockade which cannot be attacked or passed by an opponent. If a player cannot move any piece forward the number of spaces indicated by a throw, a piece must be moved backward that number of spaces to an unoccupied square. If that too is impossible, the turn is ended.

A piece landing on square 27, "the trap," must begin the game again from square 1. Squares 26, 28, 29, and 30 are "safety" squares, invulnerable to attack.

When a player has all five pieces in the third or exit row, he can begin taking them off the board with exact throws to square 30. The first player to get all his pieces off the board is the winner. If a piece is attacked in the final or exit row, the remaining pieces may not be removed until the attacked piece returns to the exit row (similar to Backgammon).

If you play several games in a row, you may wish to keep score. To do so, decide on a certain number goal to be reached. The winner scores one point for each enemy player left in the last row when he finishes, two points for every piece left in the second row, and three points for each of his opponent's pieces remaining in the first row.

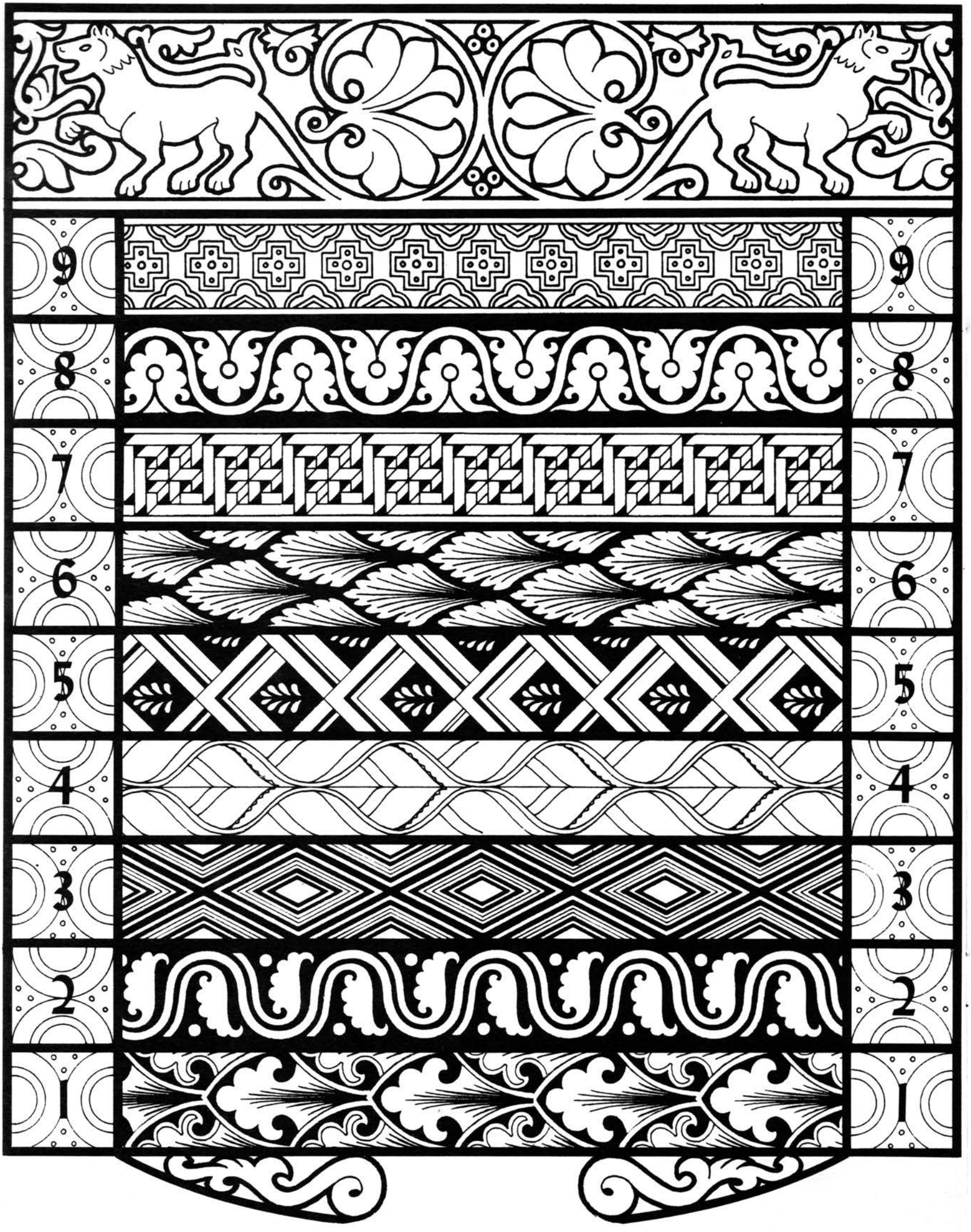
SHOVE HA'PENNY

If you've ever played shuffleboard, you already know something about Shove Ha' Penny, shuffleboard's great uncle. Popular in British taverns in the early 16th century, the game got its modern name from the half penny coins used as markers. Around the time of Shakespeare, the game was played with a popular coin, the Edward IV groat, and was called Shoffe-grotte.

PIECES: Two players each use five coins (dimes or pennies) or other discs—all of which may be the same.
TO PLAY: There are nine "beds" or ruled zones on the board. On either side of the beds are scoring squares. Each player takes a row of scoring squares, either the row to the left or the row to the right. The object of the game is to be the first player to land three coins in each of the nine beds.

The game proceeds by rounds. During a round, each player makes five consecutive "shoves." To "shove," place a coin in the semicircle at the bottom of the page and then strike the coin with your thumb and forefinger or the nail of your thumb. Any coin that goes beyond the beds or falls short of them is removed from the board; it doesn't count. A coin which lands neatly in a bed without touching any line scores one point in that bed for that player. This point is marked in a player's scoring square parallel to the bed. The coin is then removed.

A coin which lands on a line does not score, but it remains on the board during the round. If either player can nudge a coin on a line into a bed during a succeeding "shove," the coin is scored by that player, then it is removed. It doesn't matter which player originally shoved the coin onto that line. Coins still straddling a line at the end of a round are removed. Keeping track of scores is easy if you stack matchsticks or pennies in the scoring squares.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CHINESE CHECKERS

Chinese Checkers is not an ancient game nor is it really Chinese. Rather, this beloved childhood standard is a Japanese adoptation of a European strategy game *Halma*. Invented in the 1880's, Halma was the favorite game of Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, the last Empress of Russia. Apparently, Halma's popularity continued to spread east, for some historians suggest that Halma became Chinese Checkers in Japan. From Japan the game travelled to China and from China it returned to Europe. If all this travelling sounds confusing, fortunately Chinese Checkers itself is very simple to play.

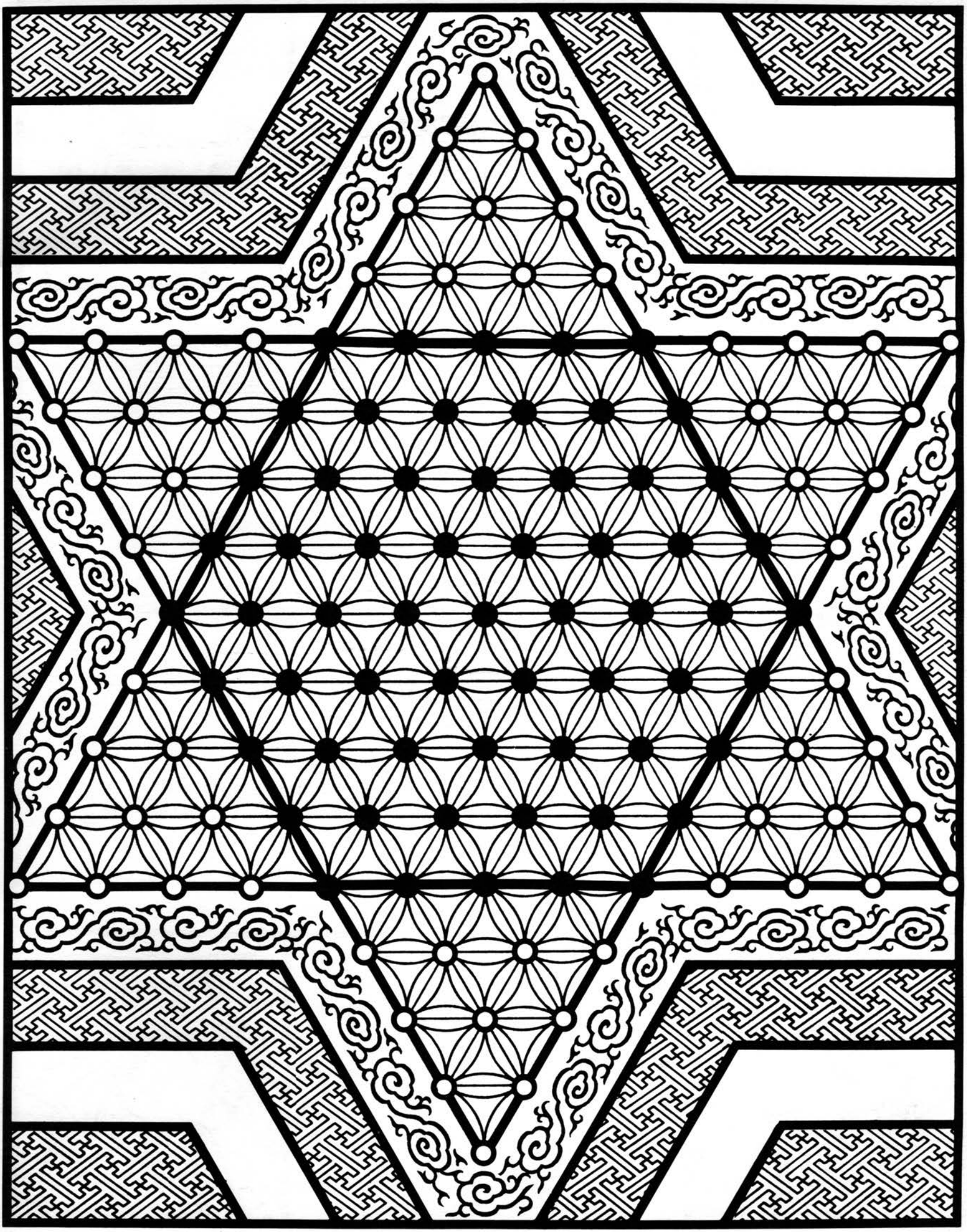
Halma was played on a 256-square checker board. Chinese Checkers is played on a board in the shape of a six-pointed star. However, this is a game that's still is transition. In contrast to the original game, some modern versions use marbles instead of checkers as playing pieces. Thus, for accuracy's sake we should say, "We hope you enjoy playing *Japanese Marbles*."

PIECES: Each of three or four players has ten pieces of a single color. With two players, each has 15 of a single color.

TO PLAY: Each player selects a point of the star as his home. With two players, home bases should face each other. With three player's, home bases are at alternate points around the board. Four players can choose their home bases at random. When played with two, each player has five rows of pieces. With three or four players, each fills the first four rows of his point.

The object of the game is to be the first player to move all of your pieces from your home base to the star point opposite. Moves are made on the diagonal (forward, backward or laterally), either a single space at a time or by jumping over another piece of any color to another space beyond. If you can make more than one jump in a single turn, by all means do so.

As you play Chinese Checkers again and again, certain strategies will become evident. Always keep in mind that your multijump setups may be just as handy for your opponent.



GLÜCKSHAUS

This game is an ancestor of roulette. Glückshaus, meaning "the house of fortune," is the German version of a dice game which was popular throughout Europe during the late Middle Ages. The board is laid out in the form of a double-armed cross. The king, who sits at the top in square 12, rules the board. A "schwein" or pig inhabits square 2, symbolizing good luck. The three little boys in square three are cherubs. Square 7 shows a wedding couple. Since wedding guests bring gifts, you must always leave something behind on square 7.

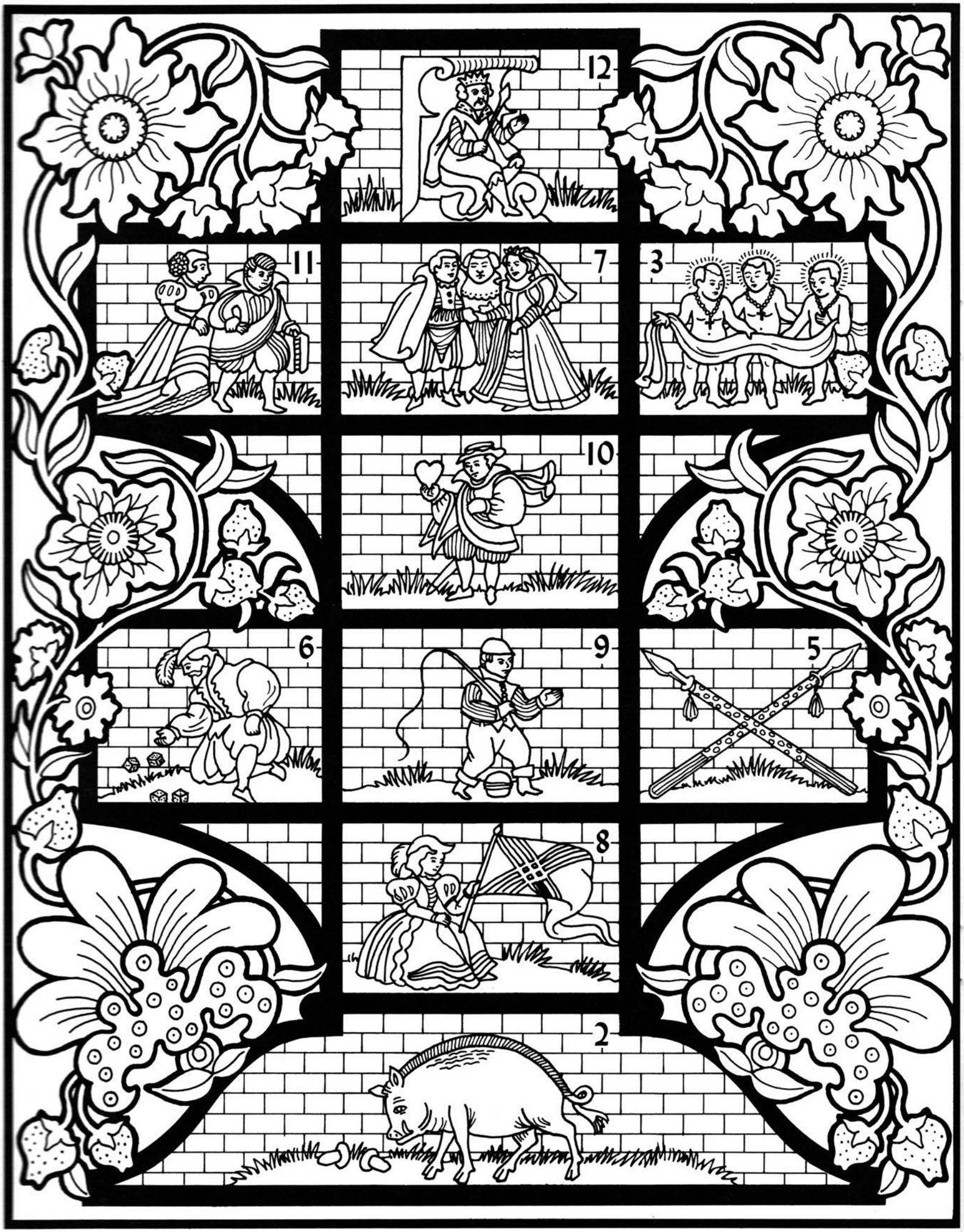
PIECES: Two dice, 12 counters per person (for instance, different colored poker chips, pennies or candies).
TO PLAY: Glückhaus is a game two or more can play. There is no movement around the board, as there is in many other games. Instead, players role the dice in turn and each role of the dice means that chips must be laid down or collected, except when a player rolls a 4, in which case the player forfeits that turn.

On a roll of 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 or 11, one counter is placed on the corresponding square. If that square already has a counter on it, the player collects that counter instead of leaving one.

When a player rolls a 7, he must put a counter on square 7, the "wedding" square, and may not pick up those counters already laid down on square 7.

A roll of 2 means that the player may pick up all the counters on the board with the exception of those counters on square 7.

A 12 or "king" throw means that a player may collect every counter on the board, including those from the "wedding" square. When a player has no more counters, he's out of the game. Play continues until one player has captured all the counters.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NINE MEN'S MORRIS

This is a very ancient game which has been popular in varying forms in many countries around the globe. It goes by many names—Morelle, Merel and The Mill, to name a few. These names all seem derivative of the French word "merel," which means counter. Five or Six Men Morris was popular in Italy, France and England during the Middle Ages. As old as Troy, Nine Men's Morris was popular among the Vikings. British settlers brought Twelve Men's Morris with them to America. German children play a form of Nine Men's Morris as an outdoor game, using themselves as counters. Their game is called Lebende Muhl, or "Living Mill."

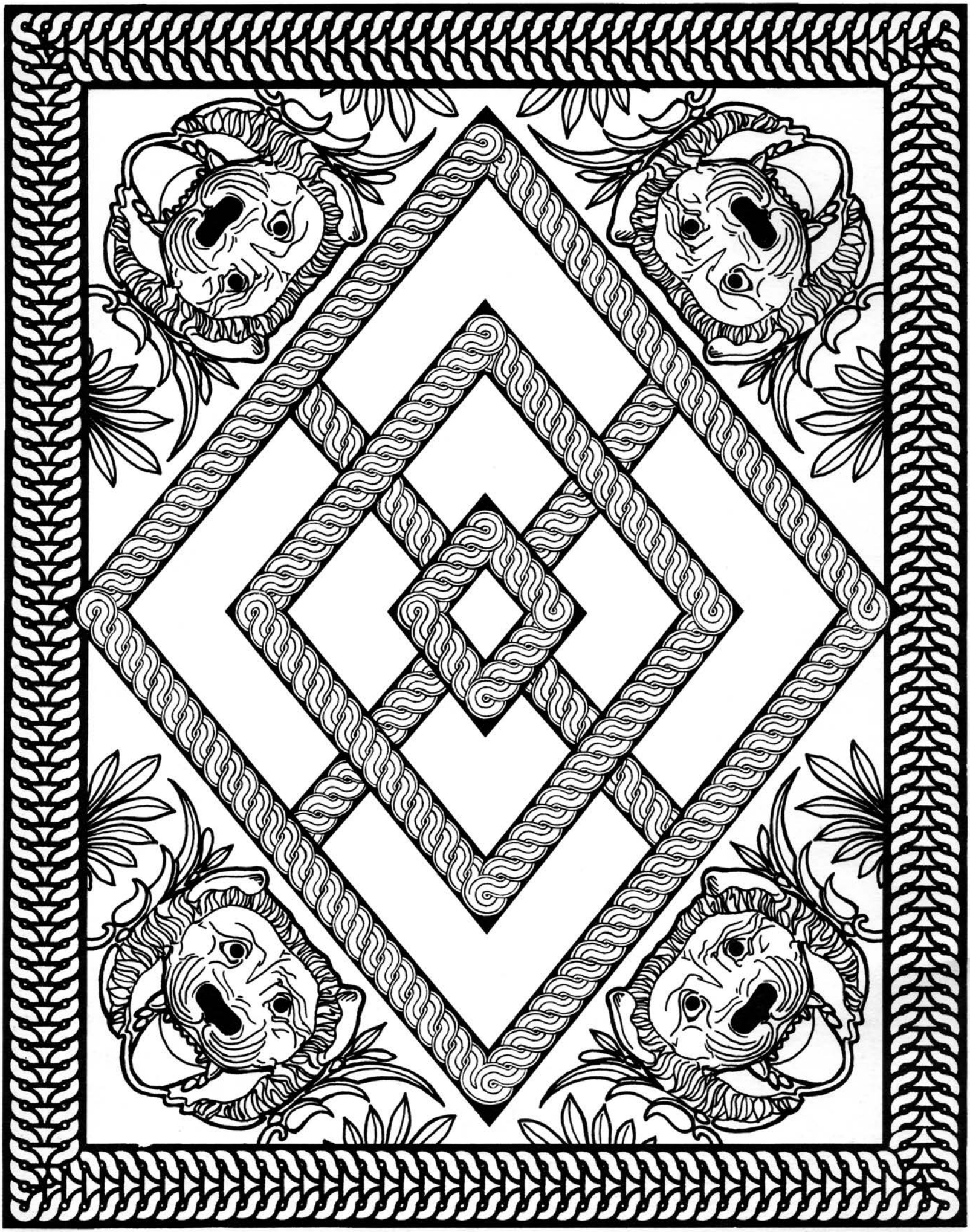
PIECES: Each of two players has nine playing pieces of a single color.

TO PLAY: There are 24 "Points" on the Morris board. Each intersection of lines is a point, including the corners of the diamonds and the midpoints of their edges.

The object of the game is to make "mills." A mill is three pieces of one color in a row on a single line.

Players take turns placing their pieces on any of the 24 points. You should of course try to place your pieces strategically. Your opponent will be doing the same. When all the pieces have been placed, moves are made by turn. You may move a piece from one point to any unoccupied point adjacent to it.

When you have made a mill, you may remove any one of your opponent's pieces from the board. A removed piece may not return to play. But you may not remove a piece from one of your opponent's mills unless he has no other pieces free. You may actually remove a piece from a mill and then return it on the next move thus forming a *new* mill. The player who reduces his opponent's pieces to two is the winner, though the game may be conceded earlier, if all of one player's pieces have been blocked.



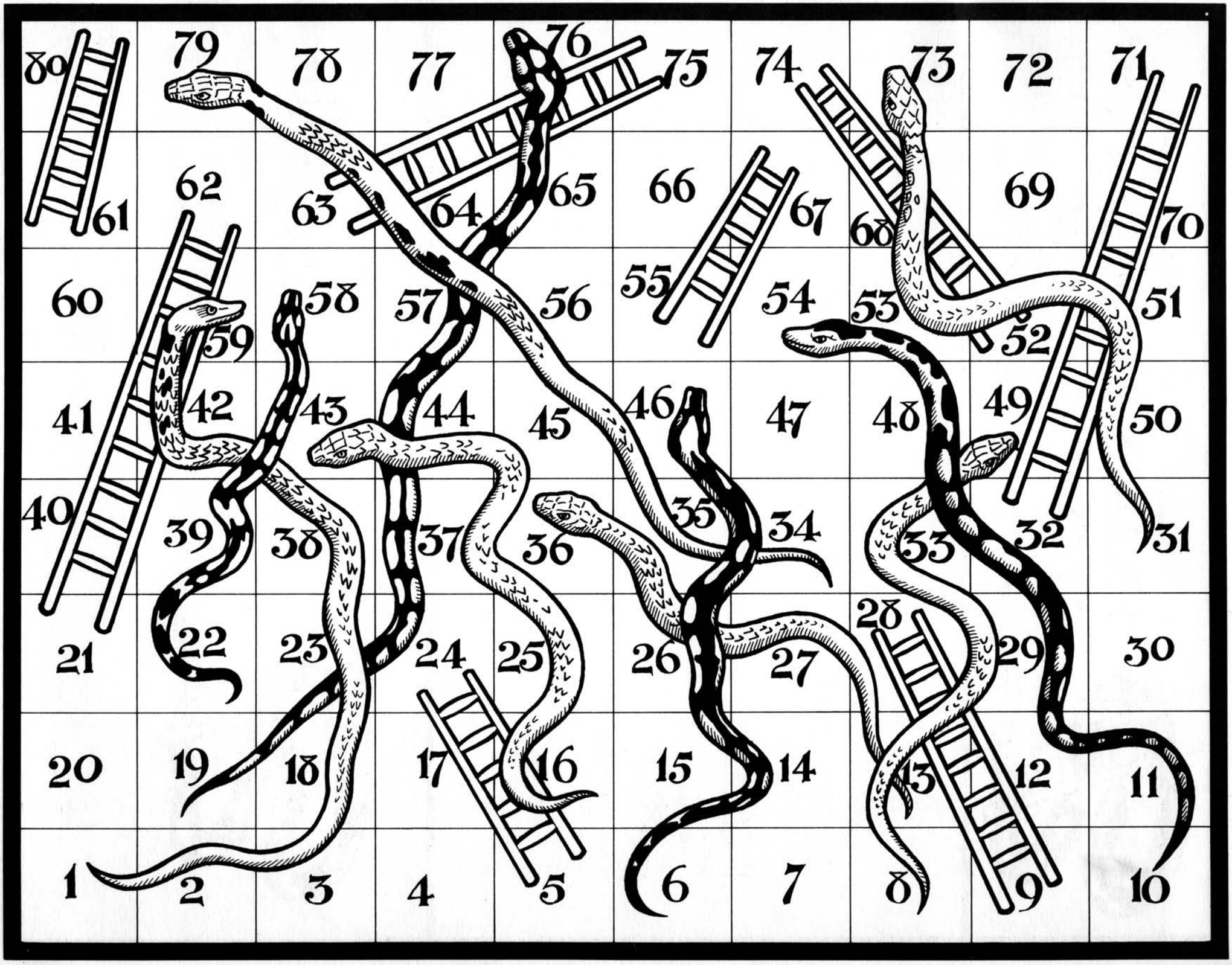
SNAKES & LADDERS

This popular race game with the addition of obstacles, comes from India, though it is played worldwide today. It was designed hundreds of years ago as a parable of the journey through life, with good deeds and bad deeds earning their just rewards. The truth of the matter is that success in Snakes and Ladders is entirely dependent on luck, and children can play their elders on equal terms.

PIECES: One die, one counter for each of two to any number of players.
TO PLAY: To begin, each player must roll a 6 to be entered on the board. Each player rolls again for the first move. The marker is moved as many squares as shown on each roll of the die. Any other throw of 6 during the game earns an extra turn.

A counter which lands on the head of a snake must be moved back to the square where the tail of the snake rests. A counter which lands at the foot of a ladder automatically advances to the top of that ladder.

The first player to reach square 80 by an exact throw of the die is the winner. If the number thrown is greater than needed, the piece must be moved backward one square for every point in excess of the number needed. Other players continue for places.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ASALTO

Asalto is a European version of the Fox and Geese game. The name Asalto means "assault" in Spanish. All variations of the game share the same basic concept: a big, slow group of pieces attacks a small, quick pair. Another name for Asalto is Officers and Sepoys, a name which originated during the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58. During that uprising in British Colonial India, native soldiers or sepoys rebelled against their commanding British officers.

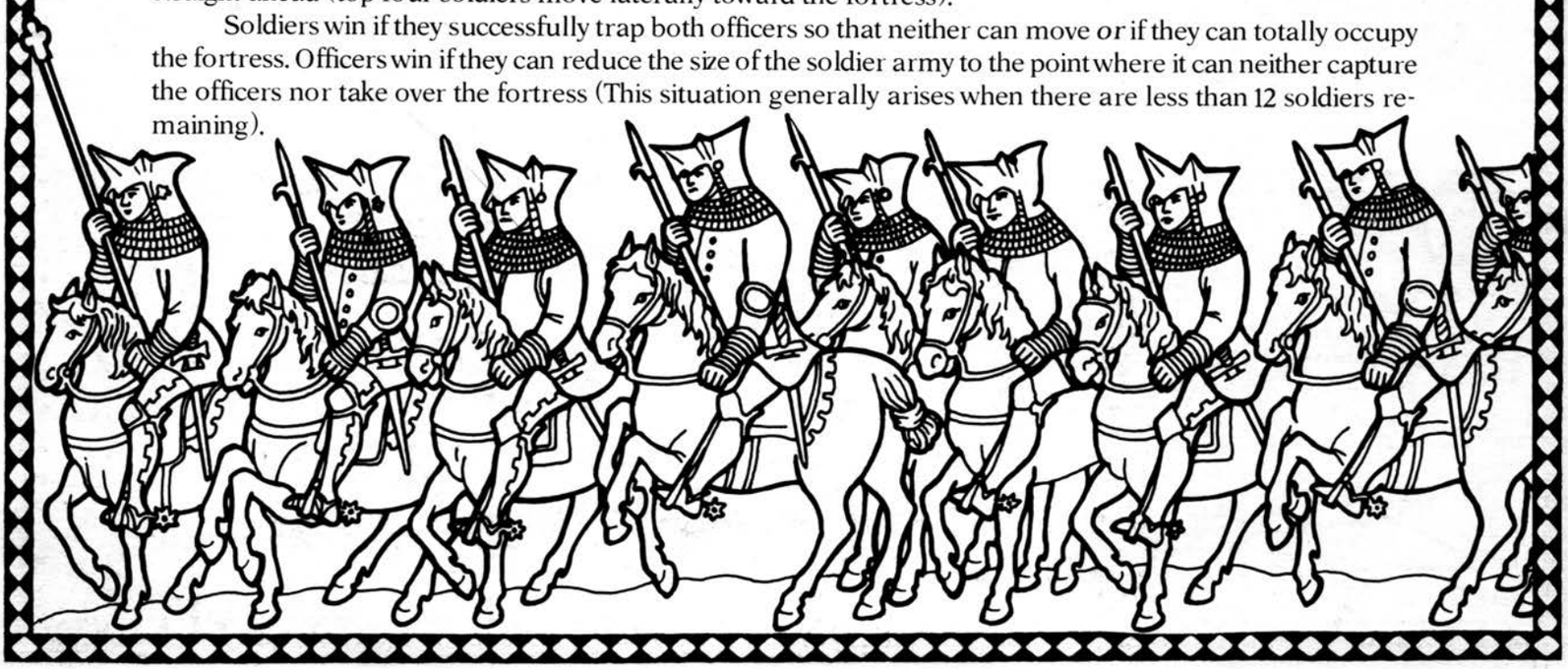
PIECES: 24 of one color, two of a second color (checkers, coins, etc.).

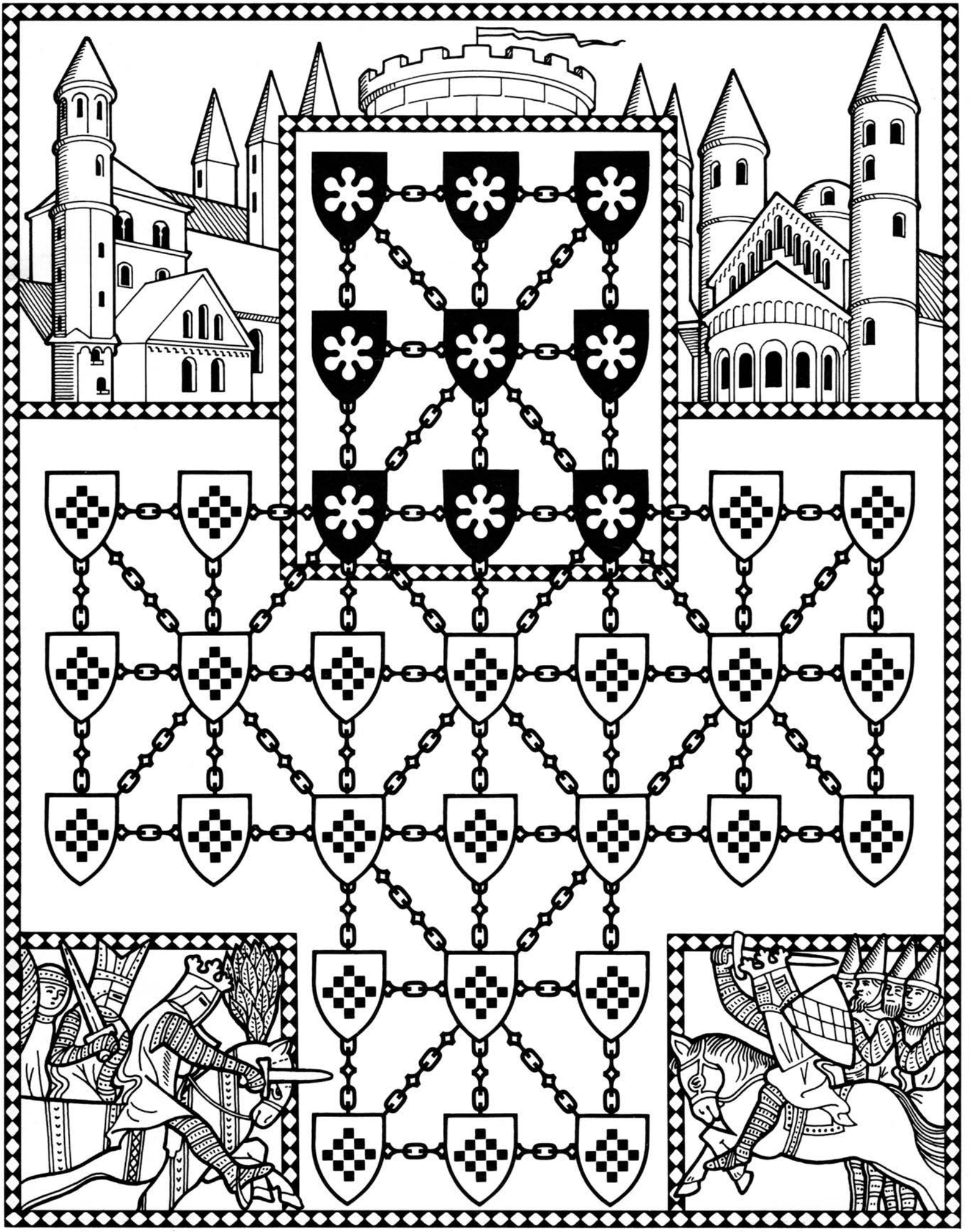
TO PLAY: One player commands the 24 soldiers. This player has the first move. The soldiers occupy every position on the board except the area designated as the fortress—the top nine squares which are enclosed in a diamond-patterned band. The other player has two pieces of a second color. These two pieces are the officers and can be positioned anywhere within the fortress area. In the course of play, officers may leave the fortress, but it is generally to their disadvantage to do so.

Officers may move one space at a time in any direction. They may also jump and capture soldiers. Captured soldiers are removed from the board. Officers are removed if they miss a *possible* capture.

Soldiers may not jump and must move in the direction of the fortress at all times, either diagonally or straight ahead (top four soldiers move laterally toward the fortress).

Soldiers win if they successfully trap both officers so that neither can move *or* if they can totally occupy the fortress. Officers win if they can reduce the size of the soldier army to the point where it can neither capture the officers nor take over the fortress (This situation generally arises when there are less than 12 soldiers remaining).





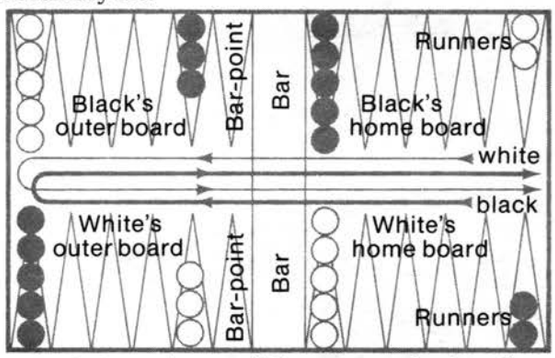
BACKGAMMON

Backgammon is easily one of the two or three most popular games in the world. It is ancient in origin—Plato played it. In recent years there has been a vast revival of interest in Backgammon.

There are many versions of the game. The one we enjoy today was developed in Britain in the early 17th Century. The French play something similar called Trictrac. An Oriental version of Backgammon, called the Bottle Game, is played with bottle-shaped playing pieces. Cortes discovered an Aztec version of Backgammon being played at the court of Montezuma.

One of the reasons for Backgammon's longstanding popularity is that it makes an exciting gambling game. Recently, a $1 million Backgammon tournament was staged in Las Vegas.

PIECES: Each of two players has 15 pieces of a single color (try small poker chips or checkers, or pennies and dimes), two dice and a doubling cube. The doubling cube is a die with the numbers 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and 64 on its six sides. It can be made from a wooden cube or simply by painting, stickering or taping over an ordinary die.



TO PLAY: The diagram shows how to set up the game to start. Each player decides which half of the board shall be his. The object of the game is to be the first to move all 15 pieces to the home board, then off the board altogether.

To begin, each player rolls a die. The higher roll goes first; using the scores on both dice the first move is made. Pieces are moved from point to point around the board, jumping the bar but not including it in the count. Each number on the dice may be treated individually. A roll of 4-2, for instance, may be used as a move of four for one piece and two for another. Or the roll may be combined for a single move of six. But a single piece may move the combined number only when it can first be moved to a free point (i.e., a point either vacant, occupied by another of that player's pieces or containing only one of the opponent's pieces), on one of the numbers of the dice throw. A 3-4 roll, for example, can only be used as a seven if the point either three or four ahead of the piece is free. A 3-4 roll may not be divided into a move of two-five or one-six though the totals are the same. A throw of doubles allows the player to move twice the amount shown on each die.

A player must use the numbers on both dice, if possible, or all four of a doublet. If either but not both numbers can be used, the higher number must be used and as many of a doublet as possible. A turn ends if no pieces can be moved on a roll.

A piece may not be moved to a point "made" by an opponent, that is, a point occupied by two or more of the opponent's pieces.

A player may move a piece forward to a point occupied by a single of his opponent's pieces (called a blot), in order to score a "hit." A blot is hit if an opponent's piece lands on that point by exact count of either or both dice. The hit piece is placed on the center bar and must be reentered on the opponent's home board at a free point there by an exact throw of one die. The hit piece must be reentered before that player can move any other piece, (passing the turn to the opponent until this is possible).

A player must move all 15 of his pieces into his home board before he begins to take them off the board. This process is known as "bearing off" (at this time, it is best to try to distribute pieces evenly among all the home points). Pieces are borne off on an exact throw of the dice until all the farthest home points have been borne off (with pieces on the fifth and sixth points, a throw of 5-6 takes them both off). If there are no pieces remaining on these points the two farthest pieces on any other home points may be removed.

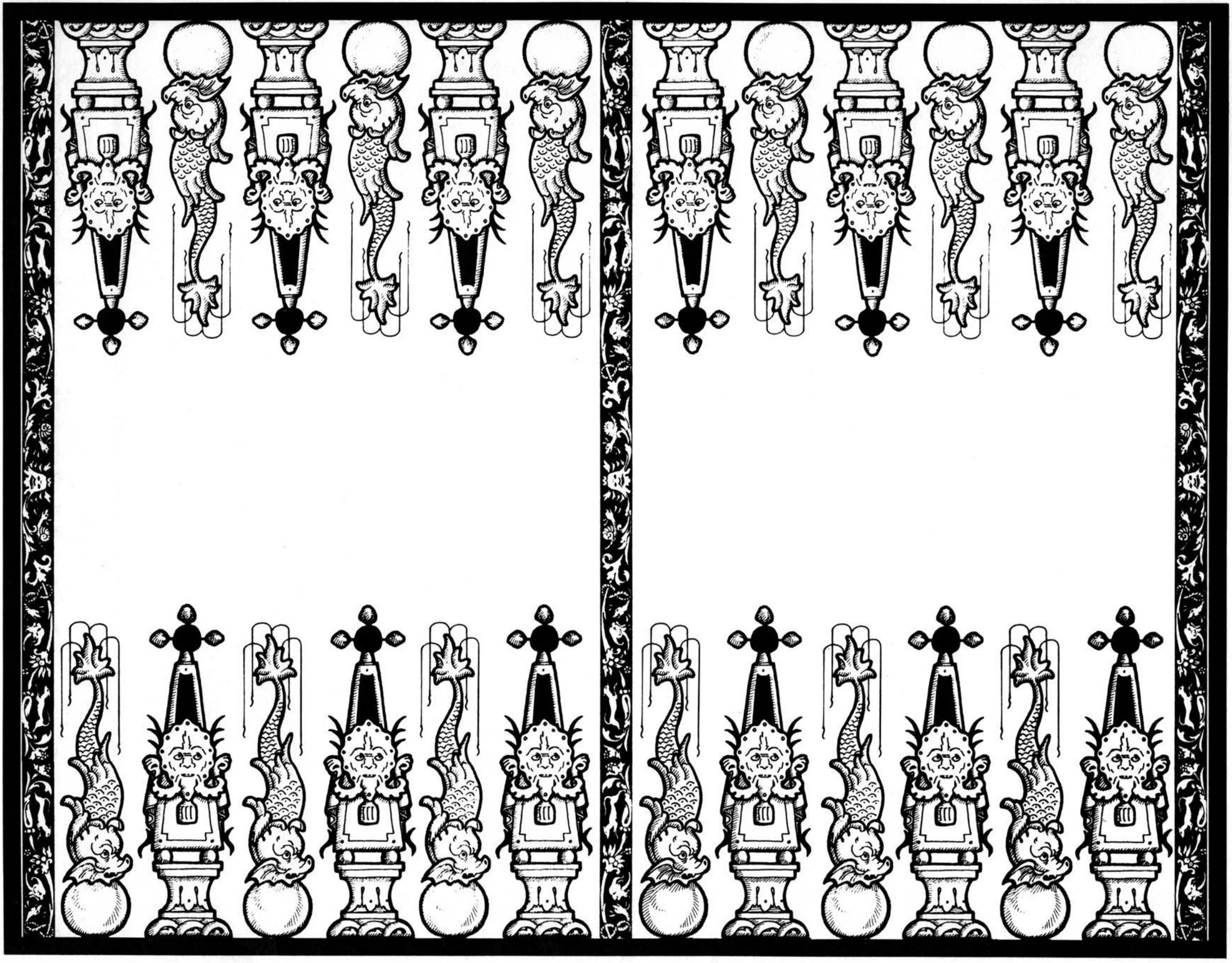
There are innumerable strategies and tactics in backgammon. You will develop yours with practice.

Most modern Backgammon is played for stakes or points with the use of the doubling cube. A basic stake (or game value in points) is decided on by the players before the game. It can be raised at anytime during the game with the use of the doubling cube. If, as the game is beginning, both players throw the same number while rolling to see who goes first, the game is automatically doubled.

A player may elect to double before any of his throws. Once a player has doubled, the next option to double passes to his opponent. An opponent may refuse a double when it is proposed, but does so only as a last resort. The game ends at that point, with the declining player paying off the stake most recently set with points—the number is recorded.

The doubling cube starts at 64 and goes to 2 when the first player doubles. Each time the number is doubled, the initial stake or points is multiplied by that number.

If the game continues to an end (one player succeeding in bearing off all its pieces) the loser pays off (or winner records number of points) the base stake as increased by any doubles. If the loser has not borne off any pieces he is gammoned and loses double. If the loser has any pieces still on the bar or on the opponent's outerboard he is backgammoned and loses triple.



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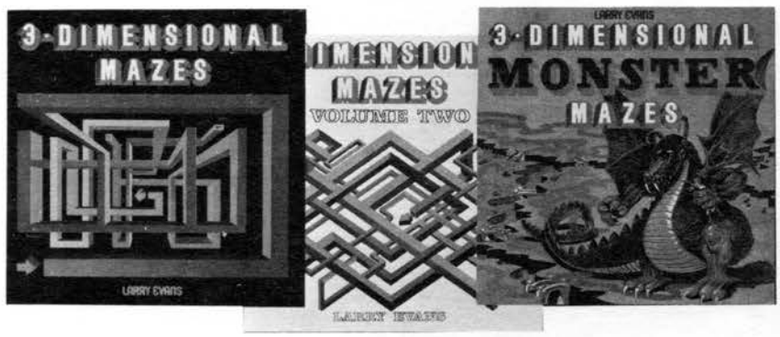

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